

The **Catch**

SUMMER 2024

Cordova's Own Literary & Arts Journal



Harvest of Salmon Eggs // Watercolor by Mazie VanDenBroek

Bounty
Issue No. 13

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All donations go to *Friends of the Library*.

Well, Friends—Somehow we're here, right smack dab in the middle of Summer. The *vvroooooom*—*squeeeeeeak*—and *rumble*—full-swing of it all. Look at us go! Let's try to remember to slow down once in a while so that we can appreciate the incredible bounty by which we're surrounded. I'll take the opportunity here to reflect on how deeply rewarding it is, through this journal, to experience the artful aspects of people that we might not otherwise know or see.

As ever, **THANK YOU** to all of our contributing artists & writers, and to a community that supports the arts!

See you in the Fall . . .

With Love & Gratitude,

Jillian Gold
Editor



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The theme is:

CURIOUSITIES

Due by September 15th.

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There is occasional use of forceful language in this publication. ***Please exercise reader discretion.***

Watercourse Way

By Steve Schoonmaker—*F/V Saulteur*

Oil Painting by Mark Flanagan — *F/V Cadillac*



From where I am in this world
there's a small Harbor town
where the pulse of vitality
is the Ocean, and the Sound
and the streams of the uplands
and the constants of Rain
and fishing fleet muscle
with acute growing pains
maintaining those harvests
that the loans have to claim
Where the Salmon know not
but anadromous ways
ancient as rains
that are gathered away
with the souls of the flows
down our Watercourse Ways
From where I am in this world

I face a rare place
a Sea and a Land of wild beauty
embraced
Entangled in conflicts
and surviving resolves
Extending Life forward
as the Planet evolves
with the cogs and the wheels
of technologies race
pushing the boundaries
of wide open space
In the glare of our headlights
at a wide open pace
Down the lines and curves
in the age of my face
Down the foams and the curls
in the waves of my wakes

(continues on next page)

Down those Watercourse Ways
that know no mistakes
only Clouds, Rains and trickles
to the Rivers and Lakes
only flow, and let go
of what's Time and what's Place

From where I am in this world
in the corners still Wild
Ah, caught in such Forces
with a heart like a child
to spill with conditions
or to shine like the Bay
Riding high on such beauty
but in conflict each day
Where the being is salty
and it's stressful, and it's loud
and the catching is brutal
and it's grateful, and it's proud
and each of us caught
in the pull of our pay
that will run through our hands
like the Rain, and the Spray
Season by season
Come what may, come what may
Season by season
that Watercourse Way

From where I am in this world
feeding more than my needs
Where the catch of my net
is what others will eat
Ah, the so many others
that know not of the Sea
or of anadromous ways
or of Wild Ocean's needs
Where the habitat losses
of the taken unseen
with the 10,000 cuts
may continue to lead
in directions away from
sustainable Steve

From where I am in this world
as I hold in my grip
all the lines and the nets
and the gills of the Fish

Ah, I claim as a living
Yes, I claim as my own
From where I am in this world
simply flesh, blood and bone
From where I am in this world
just one simple man
With a boat and a net
by a Sea and a Land
A Sea so achieving
by a Land so alive
A future uncertain
by a past known to thrive
So easily claimed
with anadromous ways
ancient as Rains
down our Watercourse Ways

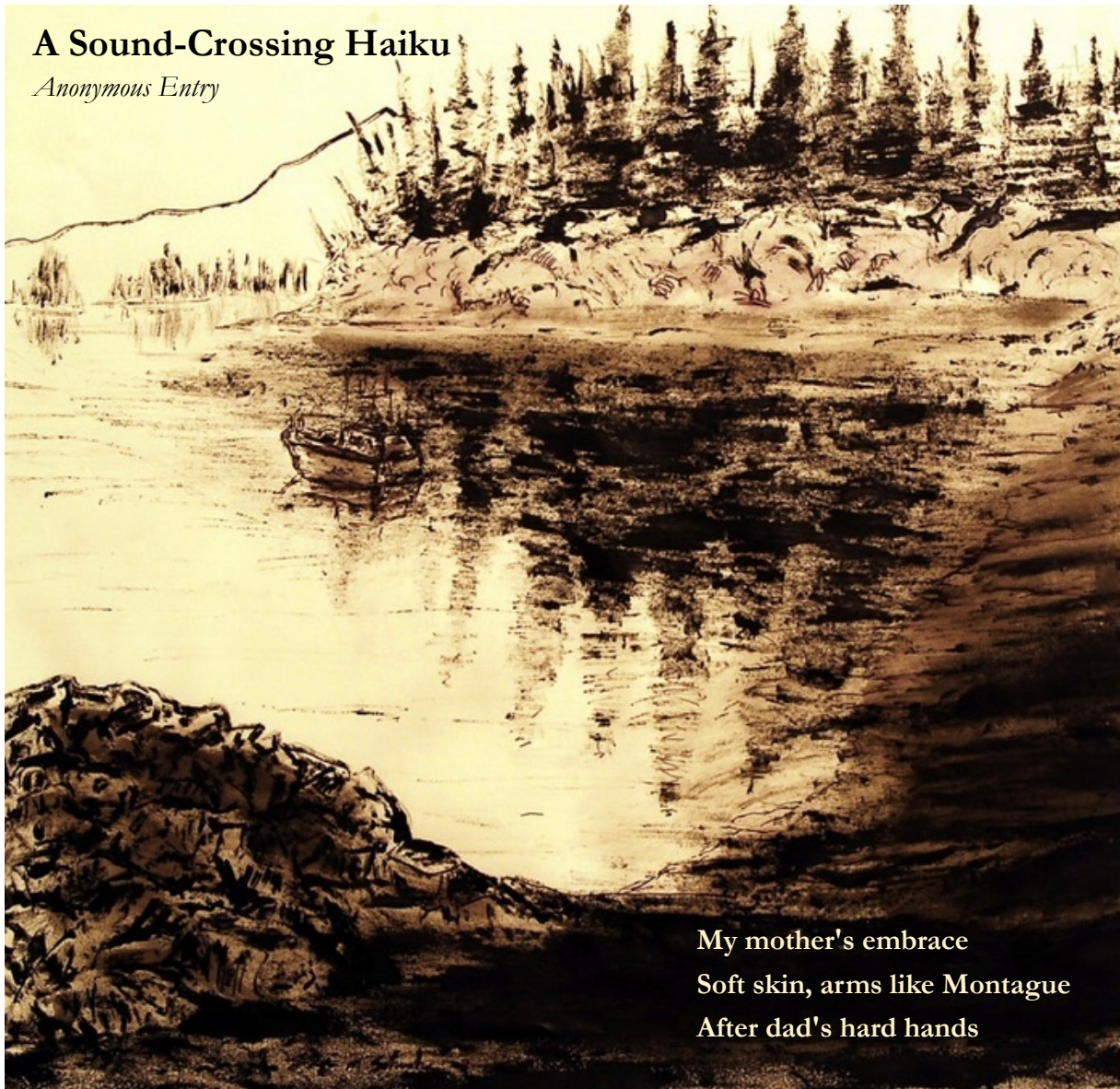
From where I am in this world
down the lows,
up the highs
Where the Gulf of Alaska
has rewarded our tries
with the flesh of our fisheries
upon which we rely
flesh innate, and instinctual
as all Human kind
However domestic
our perceptions align
disguised or unconscious
of what keeps us alive
Alive is not separate
where the Sun lights the Day
it's all held in the flows
of the Lands as they lay
at the confluence of beauty
and conflict each day
Where the Salmon know not
but anadromous ways
ancient as Rains
that are gathered away
with the souls of the flows
that the Sea will regain
So allowed by the Sky
and the Land to replay
down the sparkling shine
of our Watercourse Ways.

Photograph by David Saiget



A Sound-Crossing Haiku

Anonymous Entry



My mother's embrace
Soft skin, arms like Montague
After dad's hard hands

Blissful Sound // Feather & Ink by Steve Schoonmaker



*Students from the Copper River Basin
reflect on the oil spill during their trip with
the Copper River Stewardship Program.*

Clean Up Scrounger

By Andrew Gallt

I am from a failing system
I am from a play
A play meant to divert eyes
Scarcely away.

I am from the ships I controlled
I am from the shores I falsely patrolled.
I am from a group of liars.
I am from a crew of false providers.
I am from the lies I made.
I am from the countless lives I could have saved.
I am . . .
From death.

1989

By Aaliyah Alexander

I am from a town full of people
From fishing to hunting.
From living.

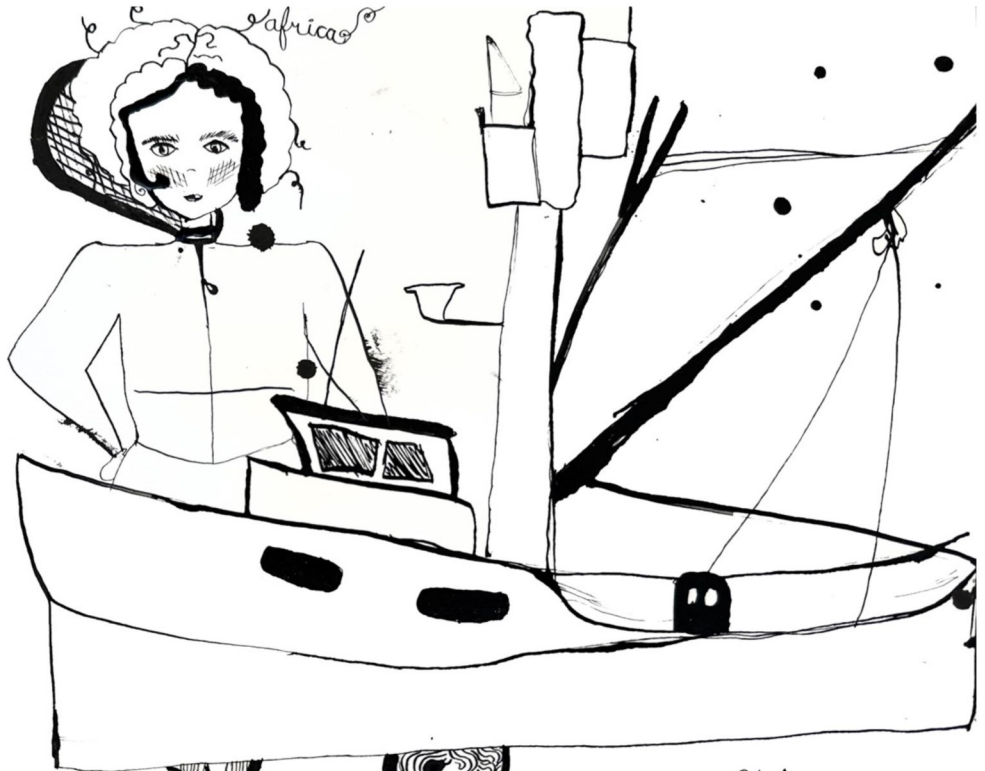
I am from Bligh Reef
All the way to the Alaska Peninsula
I am from the oil spill.

I remember the families and the kids
And all the things they had to endure
I remember how much trust was lost.

I stand for people who had to sit still
And watch as nothing happened.

I am from a town full of tired people
Trying to survive.

I am from 1989, when we all lost hope.



Travelling the World // Crow Quill & Ink by Cora Kocan



Hooligan—Eulachon—Candlefish—Savior Fish by Brian Varner



New Neighbor

By Monica Casner

Here I've come
To this far-flung town
Where mountains crash into the sea

There's a tale to be told
Of a man gone cold
By the springs near Tenakee

Safe harbor I've found
On this deep, blue Sound
With my new identity

Oh, it's the brutal men
Who want to pick when
Their woman meets her end

That fate won't be mine
My man crossed a line
So a message I did send

The sea was my choice
Once my knife took his voice
And if they come lookin' for me

I won't go in silence
Lord knows they'll forgive his violence
And hang me from a tree

But I had to take my stand
Hide out on the land
So he couldn't hurt no woman after me

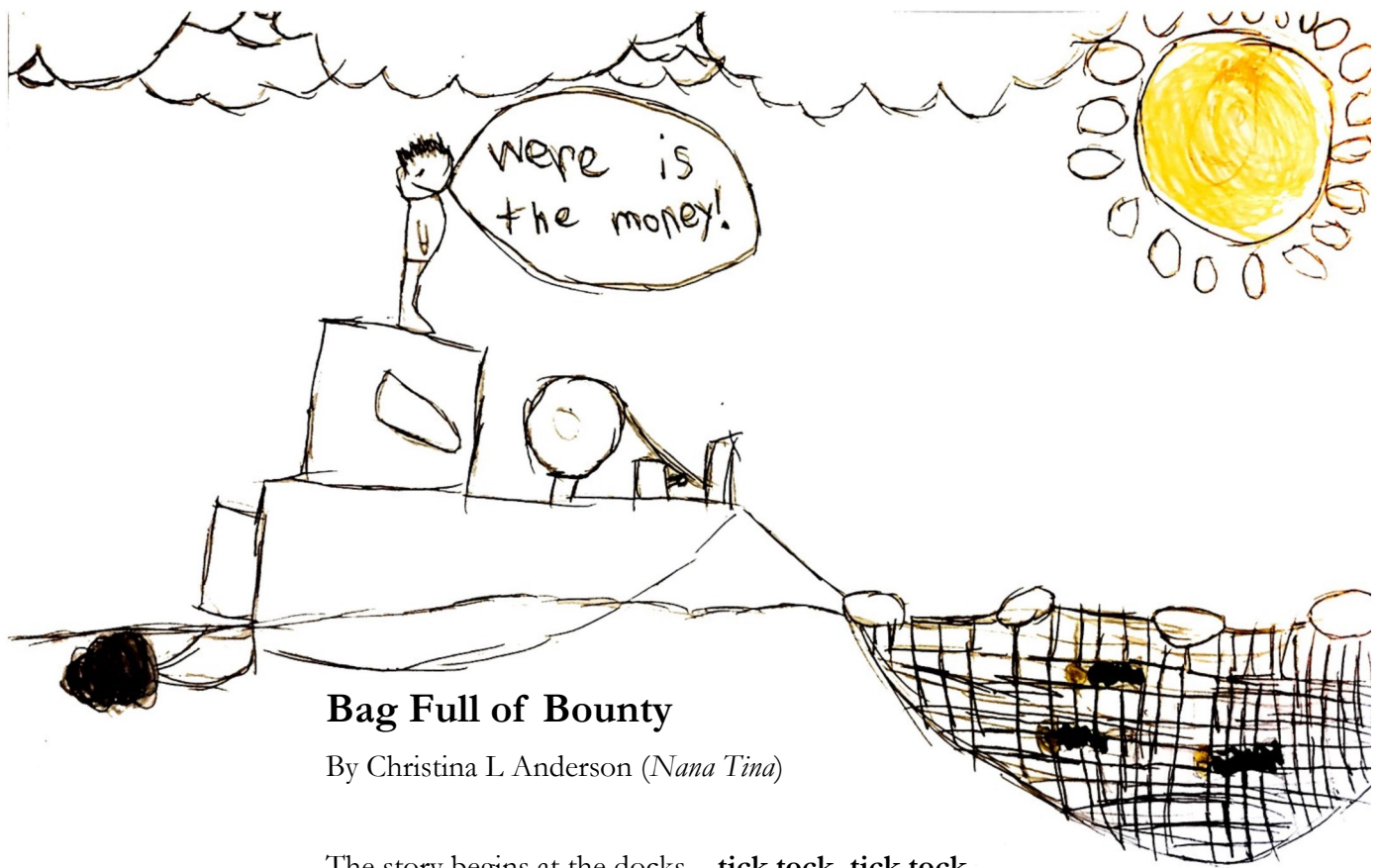
The law won't think twice
They'll name their price
On my head, they've lain a bounty.



Plenty of Snakes // Marker & Pen by Runa Kocan



I spy three rubber ducks, two toy cars, and one snake.



Bag Full of Bounty

By Christina L Anderson (*Nana Tina*)

The story begins at the docks—**tick tock, tick tock**

Channa Sea blaring electric guitar—Jimmy Hendrix at the bar

White plumes of steam—**yeah, we're livin' the dream**

Arise to bow picker thunder—ya gotta wonder

Ketchem, Ketchem, Ketchem

My barn has nets galore—**can't seem to get 1 out the damn door**

No more time to waste—gotta make haste

Preparation is over—**rub that 4 leaf clover**

Blinders on, **concision**, get that tunnel vision

Ketchem, Ketchem, Ketchem

It's what I know—can't talk now, gotta blow

Hunt the spot—**now I'm living on the dot**

Stayin' in the zone—to bring the fish home

Too many engine hours—**gotta scour, then shower**

Ketchem, Ketchem, Ketchem

Groceries, fuel, ice—ummm, **feelin' kinda nice**

Good Bye City Life

Ketchem!

Cold, wet daily attire—will we ever be able to retire?

Two versions of *Uncle Andrew Fishing for “Gold”*



This page: Chalk Illustration by Miles Nuzzi

Previous page: Pencil Illustration by Sam Nuzzi



Mulberry

By Greg Mans

The mulberry tree.

Detroit's you-pick no-charge for-free fruit grove and maybe the happiest tree in this rock-hard tight-packed lake bottom clay ground.

Mulberry leaves come on slow in spring but once started, pour forth like thunder and rain from a summer storm. It grows where no one wants it to grow. It grows when nothing else can grow, like in abandoned lots throughout the city, tight around houses and up through broken and rotted eaves of roofs. It grows along the river and at the edge of parks with grass mowed low, brown from early summer drought.

The mulberry grows and it grows. We cut it to give way to lilacs, mock orange blossoms or some other things that we desire. We turn our backs for an instant and there it is, growing tall again towards the sky like a faithful dog returning with a ball.

When spring gives way to summer-dry heat and the river calls us to lose the day and hot sweaty world by diving into her cool waters, the mulberry fruit turns from hard and white to plump soft and the deepest of purple.

The birds know. They will tell you where to search if you care to find. Noisy birds glide in and out of fruit clustered branches, their excrement littering pavement below their perch, purple stained clues showing us the way. Uneaten fallen fruit blackens cement like tar, squashed by busy car tires like soon will be the mayflies, hundreds of thousands to hatch in a week.

No one seems to eat from this tree except those birds and squirrels we barely see or hear. No one but a few cats in Detroit made hungry by art or men and women wrinkled by age, tongues thick with accent, hands and ways still molded by the old country. A few still spread sheet or tarp below the tree, climb high and shake on branches letting the sheet catch the plump-sweet-wonderful harvest. The harvest that is given and that most of us walk by in search of our own idea of gold.

The harvest that if just accepted with hands outstretched to sky, lovingly pressed and squashed to juice, makes the finest of wine.



One Man's Trash // Watercolor & Ink by Jude Nel Horney



By Such Lines We're Held

By Jillian Gold

Some times feel exhausted
Nothing left but the corpse
Dragging behind
In hideous ceremony
The next moment's carrion

Others are light and laughing
The child runs its kite
All hope on a windless morning
When even just one breath of lift
Is celebration

And maybe sweetest
Is what relieves the tree
Of its own weight
The final fall, an offering
Whole and perfect and juicy



Salmonberry, 1978 by Simone Raymond

Moments of Surrender

By Kristi Rubio



Bounty for Breakfast by David Lynn Grimes

To look across a water's edge
and see a mirrored sky
Enveloped between the two
speaks moments of disguise
The truth of sight always beckons
at the beauty in our eye
Singing chirps of melodies
as birds caress the sky
Drowning in a voiceless pause
to reflect and mend
the sanctity that goes unseen
Patchwork quilt it back together
as we center back within
Always shifting through rocks
and crevasses of our knees
Remember to bend and stretch
the bounty of our dreams.



Illustration by Debbie Maxwell

Drama

By Sam Bair

Playwrights must have a bad rap.
Is it a grumbling born of dependency?
An overweening minority, yearning for freedom?
Warnings, imprecations, bywords—
The fae have gone too far!
Drum beats against wizard enchanters—
Evil, evil, evil.
Cui Bono? What is the constant source?
"Real life" with a vengeance—
Prosecuted behaviorally, with praise and condemnation,
Must not strain the confines of emotion—
The flood gates must always hold back the water.
Expression, feeling, inner life.





Painting by Duyen Masolini

Cypripedium

By Jack Donachy



Fairyland - Spotted Lady's Slippers, Alaska Peninsula by Jack Donachy

After Fred died and the posse broke up
the trails on that side of the lake didn't see much use

yellow? pink?
there was that white one on flower island
and the sparrow's eggs I found when I followed those
loons
last time I wrote
I wrote about flowers
(the flowers I'm always talking about)
I don't remember anything about them
except . . .
the latin
and Dr. Penny's farm—
(not the farm itself
just the name because it was funny to young me
a man named Penny)
she wanted some for our woods
and we loved each other
(back then)

(continues on next page)

so he took me along to *see*
the forest light, the open flowers
he dug up
and planted again
and every morning
I raced down the trail to check on them
the way I checked on the minnows
I'd put in the pond
till they died

this time I didn't cry
but we grew apart
after that
and I kept looking for them
all my life
rare
I suppose
I could have asked around
but I wanted to find them myself . . .
like all those times I would knock on hollow trees
hoping for an owl or flying squirrels to appear
to Discover
them

with our friend gone
the trails fell back
to willow and salmonberry brakes
alder tangles
the path ever opening and closing
several times we lost it
knelt close to the earth to search low,
for the portal through
we weren't looking for anything
snipe nests, caribou, wolf prints, fox dens

fifty years of not finding
and suddenly at my feet
The Flower!
rare, singular
I lowered to my belly all happiness
to make a photograph
Barbra proceeded up the hill
Jack! Up here! More! Lots more!
I rose
O! The joy!
Fairyland!

A Bounty of Birds

By Jeanie Gold



Watercolors & Ink by Jude Nel Horney

Spring-merging-into-Summer
is a remarkable time of year
here, in Cottonwood Arizona

with steadily-expanding days of
vibrant sunshine and vast blue skies

where the Verde Valley and mountainsides
awaken in a patchwork quilt, of browns
and greens, as far as the eye can see.

Two types of Bald Eagles keep vigilant watch
and are often spotted, perched in barren treetops.
Some overwinter, others are here all year.

(continues on next page)

Yellow-legged Stilts and Snowy Egrets
with their black legs and bright yellow feet,
have migrated through to somewhere else.

Ospreys, with their rapid-fire flawless dive,
easily snag fish from the lagoons, where a
rookery of Great Blue Heron reside, nearby.

Yellow Warblers, Western Bluebirds, and
red-hued Tanagers have returned, brightly
dotting tree branches with patches of color.

Loudly squawking Grackles number many
at Dead Horse Ranch Park—and, somehow,
they have managed to capture my heart.

Coots and Wood Ducks have left, Mallards remain.
Last week, a momma was trailed by twelve ducklings.
There were eight on the last four yesterdays, and also today.

Summertime Costa's, Black-chinned, and Broad-tailed
hummingbirds have rejoined our year-round Anna's.
They aggressively display dominance at each birdfeeder.

A pair of Gambel's Quail built a nest, again
underneath the same front yard bush.
Their distinctive calls intrigue our cat.

Mourning doves coo in the early hours
Roadrunners scurry to-and-fro
Red-tailed hawks circle high above
and a Great Horned Owl hoots at night.

Around sunrise, a chorus of birds regularly abounds.
They chirp, coo, tweet, caw, whistle, producing
a magical symphony of soothing sounds.

Soon, our monsoon rains will arrive
painting evening cloudscapes, and
panoramic sunsets of spectacular design.

There is immense beauty here to revere,
through every season of every year.

*Thank you, Mother Nature
for your beneficent, magnificent gifts!*



Watching Future Bounty by Chris Byrnes

Sacred Strawberries

By Stef Tschappat



Photograph by Stef Tschappat

Planting growing
so much hoeing
Fight the critters
who all want a taste
Weeding some more
so none go to waste
Time to pick
the little sweet treats
One in the bucket
another I eat
Freeze them whole
For winter eating
The season of berries
is ever so fleeting.

Four Cups of Wild Blueberries

By Barbra Donachy



“Would you make us a wild blueberry pie?”

It was the “us” part that made me nervous. I was in regular competition with the world’s best pie maker—Jack’s Grandma Poco. The worst part of being in competition with a ghost is that her pies grow infinitely better in his memory as each year of her passing grows further away.

I was never really good at pie crust. I was plagued with problems. There were so many variables that I was getting wrong, it was hard to determine just what to fix. My crusts were too tough. Or they were too crumbly. Then the flavor was . . . well, you get the picture. But I knew that pie was Jack’s absolute favorite. It wasn’t just the flavor. Pie is tied to the sweet memories of care and love from his favorite person in the world. This was my inspiration and motivation to keep trying to get it right.

I asked experts. I read books and blogs and started to hone in on corrections. Once in a while, I would hit it just right. Jack would proclaim that one a winner. And with a desire to have a world-class pie maker in his life, he would honor me with the title. But I was not confident that my crusts would come out consistently. So any time Jack offered up pie as a dessert to visitors or friends, I was nervous about agreeing.

“I need four cups of wild blueberries to make a pie. Five, if you want a couple of mini-pies. You two go pick the berries and I’ll do the baking.”

But I was not about to send them out without accompanying them. I love berry picking. Every aspect of it is rapturous. The trail to the berry bog starts just ten minutes from our doorstep. At the ten-minute mark, we disappear into a wildness that fewer than one hundred living people have entered. We follow a Honda trail whose ruts never completely heal in the fragile tundra. Salmonberry brakes, purple geranium and gentle yarrow guide our way to the bog. The pond we pass in early fall is shallow. We scan its bottom for signs of other travelers . . . a few moose tracks, lots of bear causing me to reflexively touch the can of bear spray holstered on my belt as we pass. Another ten minutes down the path and the bog stretches out before us. Small mounds dotted with deep red wineberries ornament the scene and the gentle slopes running down to the bog are accented with cranberry and crowberry. And all along the perimeter of the bog are lowbush blueberry plants. At first, I don’t see any berries, and so I pause for a few moments and allow my eyes to adjust. Now, I see them. The little bushes are loaded with dark blue treasures.

(continues on next page)

The lichen growing around the ankle-high bushes is thick and soft, and so I sit down to pick. If I'm lucky, there might be a group of several little berries to pick at one pull. Cool autumn air swirls around me. There is no human sound. I listen to grasses and sedges rustling. Once in a while the crack of a branch from nearby alder thickets brings me back to the reality that I share this berry bog with other fall harvesters—namely mama bears and their tousling babies.

Picking the tiny berries is not a quick task. It is a meditation. I study individual berries and plants and take note of the varying shapes and colors. I imagine I am a berry scientist studying and

defining the exact microbiome that prompts the healthiest plants and the tastiest fruit. As the sound of berries hitting the bucket goes from bright-sounding plinks to lower pitched plunks, I know—even without looking—when my container is nearly full. As the daylight wanes, I know we have enough berries. As usual, I am not ready to leave.

With our bounty tucked in our backpacks, we head home to the crust that I've readied. With a little love and a little luck, Jack will get the perfect flaky-crust wild blueberry pie of his dreams.

**Alaska Wild Blueberry
Skillet Pies**
(Makes two 6-inch skillet pies)

Ingredients

- 1 double pie crust
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup cold water
- 5 cups wild blueberries, divided
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice

Directions

1. In a saucepan over medium heat, combine sugar, cornstarch, salt and water until smooth. Add 3 cups blueberries. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened and bubbly.
2. Remove from the heat. Add butter, lemon juice and remaining berries; stir until butter is melted. Cool.
3. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees F.
4. Cut four circles out of pie dough.
Each dough circle should be about 1/2 inch larger than the mini skillet you're using as your guide. Place the dough circle into the skillet, being careful not to stretch the dough.
With a knife, trim off any excess dough.
5. Next, evenly divide the blueberry filling among the skillets.
Top each with approximately 1/2 tablespoon of cubed, cold butter.
6. Cover each skillet with a piece of dough.
Using your fingers, crimp the edge of dough all the way around to seal.
Brush with egg wash and sprinkle lightly with sugar.
Cut a slit in the top of each pie for steam to escape. Place skillets onto a cookie sheet for baking.
7. Bake for 35-40 minutes or until crust is golden and the filling is bubbly.
If the top crust starts to get brown before the inside is hot, cover with aluminum foil.
8. Cool before serving. Top with your favorite vanilla ice cream.

Remember in Joy

By Charlie Carté

For Jules and Esa, we spent a year rekindling childlike joy. And for Molly, a dog's time in a human's life is so precious.



Quoye // Needle felt by Carol Hazeltine

Jasper never fared well with extra time on his hands. Not that he was lonesome; on the contrary, he prided himself on his ability to enjoy his own company. A constant companion was needed in a world so vast and large as his. Since no partner had ever arisen, his own self would have to suffice. He found himself funny, entertaining, compassionate, and incredibly earnest—all traits he valued in a friend.

Today, however, Jasper sat in his tiny, dark home and felt entirely alone. Some of his friends had hibernated, others had migrated for the long winter, more still had gone away to live their lives, and a few tired old souls had passed on to the next life. He was left with the charitable squirrel family, whose bustling members always welcomed Jasper but left him feeling overwhelmed with all the names he had to remember. The vole family, kind and resigned as they were, would never overstay their welcome. This left the shrew family that, quite frankly, were too

timid of Jasper's stature to ever make much conversation with.

As Jasper's grey fur slowly covered his face, he had become quite the chatterbox and could admit so with some pride. Currently, the lack of conversation dulled his daily life. Never in his youth did Jasper talk, but being caged by humans for five seasons would do that to a young lad.

Jasper had considered himself a refugee in the forest after being misplaced by his human owners. He bonded with the other animals, though communication was always tepid at best due to his lack of understanding of the common tongue. He diligently worked on his social skills.

He remembered his savior, the kindly old hare, Aldwin, Who had taught him the common language of Idlewood, the forest he had come to love. Aldwin had a dusting of grey fur by the time Jasper fell into his care but took the lowly rabbit in.

(continues on next page)

Jasper was taught the customs of the forest, cultivated friendships in odd places, and eventually built a home (this was, of course, before Jasper had retired and made his dream home). By the end of Aldwin's life, Jasper was living comfortably in the forest with friends and family galore. Aldwin could proudly say he had helped raise the poor rabbit into what he had become. Jasper missed the old hare dearly on days like today.

Today, Jasper was reminiscing. He mourned those he had lost to time and others who had left the forest for greener pastures. If this mood kept on much longer, the day would surely turn sour, so he hoisted himself up and got moving. As he bustled his way through the door, he picked his favorite basket from the bunch, a gift woven by Alice's youngest sibling, Perch. He was headed out to forage, a much-needed distraction to set his mind at ease.

He decided on dandelions, picking the green leaves and digging for the roots. The late spring sun shone brightly on his fur and warmed him to his core. His woven basket held much of his harvest, splashes of green intermixed with large clumps of roots he had dusted dirt off. Sitting on the rocks near the lake to cool off, Jasper allowed himself to rest. He could return to his dillydallying later.

Commons Lake was a large, Y-shaped body of water that was always moving, however slight. Jasper was fond of Commons; the Fall Festival was held on the northern shore, and many memories had been made there. Today, Jasper was closer to the westernmost part of the lake, where dandelions grew voraciously.

He sat, lost in thought of old times once more. When a young spotted sandpiper flew down to the shore of the lake, Jasper didn't notice immediately; when the bird approached, Jasper was startled. The young bird had not yet gained spots on his belly, but his mud-colored

legs and long yellow beak gave him away. The young bird bobbed his way over toward the rabbit.

"Mind if I join you, old sir?" the young sandpiper asked. Motioning to himself, he added, "Name's Cormick."

Jasper smiled, "Well, hello, young Cormick, I'd be rather pleased if you did. My name is Jasper."

The young bird's eyes widened. "The rabbit? I've heard much about you, sir. Yer very popular with the Furs, ain't ye?"

"I couldn't say myself, but I'll take your word for it! If you don't mind my asking, why the movement?"

Cormick's eyes narrowed, again bobbing up and down as he did so. "You judging me, sir? Ridiculing?"

Jasper shook his head vehemently, "I've seen your kind do it before but never asked. Merely satiating my own curiosity."

"Humans had a saying about cats and curiosity and whatnot."

"Hm, did they? I'm not familiar."

"Pity. Probably better you didn't hear it and say it to your cat friend down the road." He paused to catch a fly. While swallowing, he thought mindfully, "I bob because me mam bobbed; she learned from her mam. Cousins do it, too. Not sure why we do it."

"Stuck in your ways, eh?"

"I s'pose so. I like to think I do it in honor of me mam. There's a certain comfort now they're gone, y' understand? You got family like that, Jasp?"

Jasper blinked. No one had ever called him 'Jasp' before, and he quite liked it. He had no family to speak of. "I never knew my family."

(continues on next page)

The sandpiper nodded grimly, “Yer the rabbit that the humans lost,” he said sagely, “got bitten by a spider and was forced to live among us heathens since your newfound brute strength was too much for a human house.”

Jasper paused, taken aback; this was certainly not the case, but Cormick sounded sure. “Um... not as such. You’re too young to remember how it happened, I think.”

“Oh, aye, but I’ve heard the stories of ye, sir. Quite a legend in the peeps’ world.” Jasper believed him. “Anyway, family dinnae have to be blood relation, found family is as good as blood.”

Jasper thought of Aldwin baking biscuits on weekends and brewing nettle leaf tea on festival mornings for the early risers who had to travel farther than most to celebrate. He nodded, finally, “Aye, s’pose I do.”

“Feels like Idlewood has lost many a-kin this last season, no? Not just souls passing on but them that left the forest, too.”

Jasper followed this trail of thought. Decidedly, this season had brought many departures. Something was changing in the wind or some such saying. When all was said and done, Jasper felt coddled into being the last animal living in the forest by choice. This thought saddened him. “I do feel everyone is leaving me behind. Maybe not by choice, not even bein’ aware. I don’t quite like it if I’m to be ‘onest. But here I’ll stay; watch ‘em come an’ go.”

“Do ye honor them, friend?”

“...Honor?”

“Mm, honor. Do ye remember them well? Not just in sadness but in joy; happier times.” He pecked at the ground, “To honor a friend, not even one passed on but just...moved on, is to think of them at the best of times, to remember

all the good fun had, and to mourn their place in yer heart but seldom look back. Honor them by keeping the joy ye found with them aflame.”

Jasper shifted on his rock. Was this daft, young sandpiper right? He was too young to have spots on his belly, yet his wisdom was beyond his years. The memories of friends long past didn’t have to be sad; he didn’t have to mourn while thinking of them. He could enjoy the memories with a smile and could be joyous.

He was moved to think of the Brennan family, an ermine family of 8, who had moved back to the other side of the forest last year after only living in the area for a short time. The father had been commissioned to help with the old human settlement excavation; his wife and children had followed suit.

Jasper was the first to welcome the family to Idlewood. It was a custom he had taken over from Aldwin. He had guided them on long walks across the lake and around the river and took the children foraging for mushrooms to alleviate the hardship off of their young mother.

Yet, a year into their move, the family moved back across the land. Their family had sent word that the matriarch had grown ill, and the father’s job proceedings held little importance regarding family matters. In just one short year, however, Jasper had grown close to the family and had become invested in all their lives. The hole left in their wake had caused Jasper a month of grieving. Even before they had left, it caused Jasper grief. Each interaction was seen as a last time, last dinners, tea times, festivals, and foraging outings.

Jasper realized the time he had spent mourning their departure was valuable time he missed enjoying their time together. Even before old Aldwin’s passing, Jasper had mourned his loss. He felt a fool.

(continues on next page)

“Cormick, you young, wise, feathered friend! How stuck in my ways I have been; to not be in the present, looking at the past as if it were all I have. Oh, all the times I should have been honoring their memory.” He wrung his hands, and his head drooped in shame. His old grey ears were limp at his sides.

Cormick bobbed beside the old rabbit, unsure of the Furs’ approach to comfort as he lacked arms or paws. He placed a wing around Jasper’s shoulders, a small, awkward gesture. “Jasp, old friend; you mustn’t let it get to ye. At least now ye have the forethought to be aware of the habit. Now you can be sad of their leavin’ ye, but still enjoy their company while it lasts.”

Cormick was right, Jasper knew. He could only allow himself to wallow for so long, but still... it wrenched his heart thinking of his dear old friends. “I miss them all greatly, even the ones I can still see on festival days. I cherish all m’ friends deeply. Their time spent with me is a gift

I can never repay.” He motioned to Cormick, “Even this afternoon spent with you! How insightful you’ve been to talk to and comfort me even though ya barely know me.”

Cormick shuffled bashfully, “Aw, thanks, friend. I merely came out for a light snack; didn’t think I’d make a friend on the way.” He laughed lightly.

“Will you stay here long?” Jasper asked, hopeful while knowing sandpipers would soon be migrating.

This proved correct, he knew, as a wry smile flitted across the bird’s face, “I leave when my kin does. A few weeks time, but enough time to keep ye company if ye so wish.”

“I do wish it.”

“Then allow me the small grace of savoring my company now and looking back on it with a smile.”



Wilderness Solitude Bounty // Watercolors by Teal Barmore



Wakan

By Tina Yo-Ma

Form/Body Intact by Tina Yo-Ma

A painful journey,
Over a decade long.
Waiting but in denial.

Fluid buildup: Face,
Legs, lungs, stomach,
Pure agony.
Cramping legs.
Screams fill the air occasionally.
Yet active she remains,
In art, pottery, embroidery.

She emotionally fell,
Like a 1,000-piece puzzle
Tossed into the air,
Scattered across a large marble floor.

Team voted, "NO"
Too ill.
All docs disappear,
For the Thanksgiving holiday.

Extensive test results line up,
Like stars in the constellation,
Orion the Hunter.

Marcia's doc on duty,
Overrides the team's decision.
Phone call to Marcia
From nurse confirms it.

A speedy plane carrying,
Precious cargo lifts its wheels,
Heading for Kansas City, MO.

After the 4.5-hour operation,
Paralyzed from the waist down,
legs feel like **huge** stones.
Immobile, temporary.

Two days pass,
Another 4-hour operation.
Bleeding out, a leakage.

Thanksgiving has a dual meaning.
Marcia's young nephew coins it well.
"We are having turkey for
Thanksgiving.
Marcia is having liver."

A unique private party is orchestrated,
In the hospital by Marcia,
One of a kind:
Compassionate, sensitive,
Nurturing, thoughtful, tearful.

Marcia introduces her new liver,
To all her organs of birthright.
Stating, "Be kind, accepting,
We all belong together."
Organs floating in the air.
She weeps.
Feeling protective of her new liver,
Then drifts off to sleep,
Feeling a sense of relief.

Arrives home on Christmas Eve,
Marcia: "I'm so glad winter is over."
Out of touch, hospitalized for two months.

Lakota Sioux: Grief is a great gift.
Belief the gods are closer to us when,
Suffering is present.

Wakan in the Lakota Sioux language
Is translated as "Most Holy."
My friend, Marcia, survivor,
A "Most Holy" time.

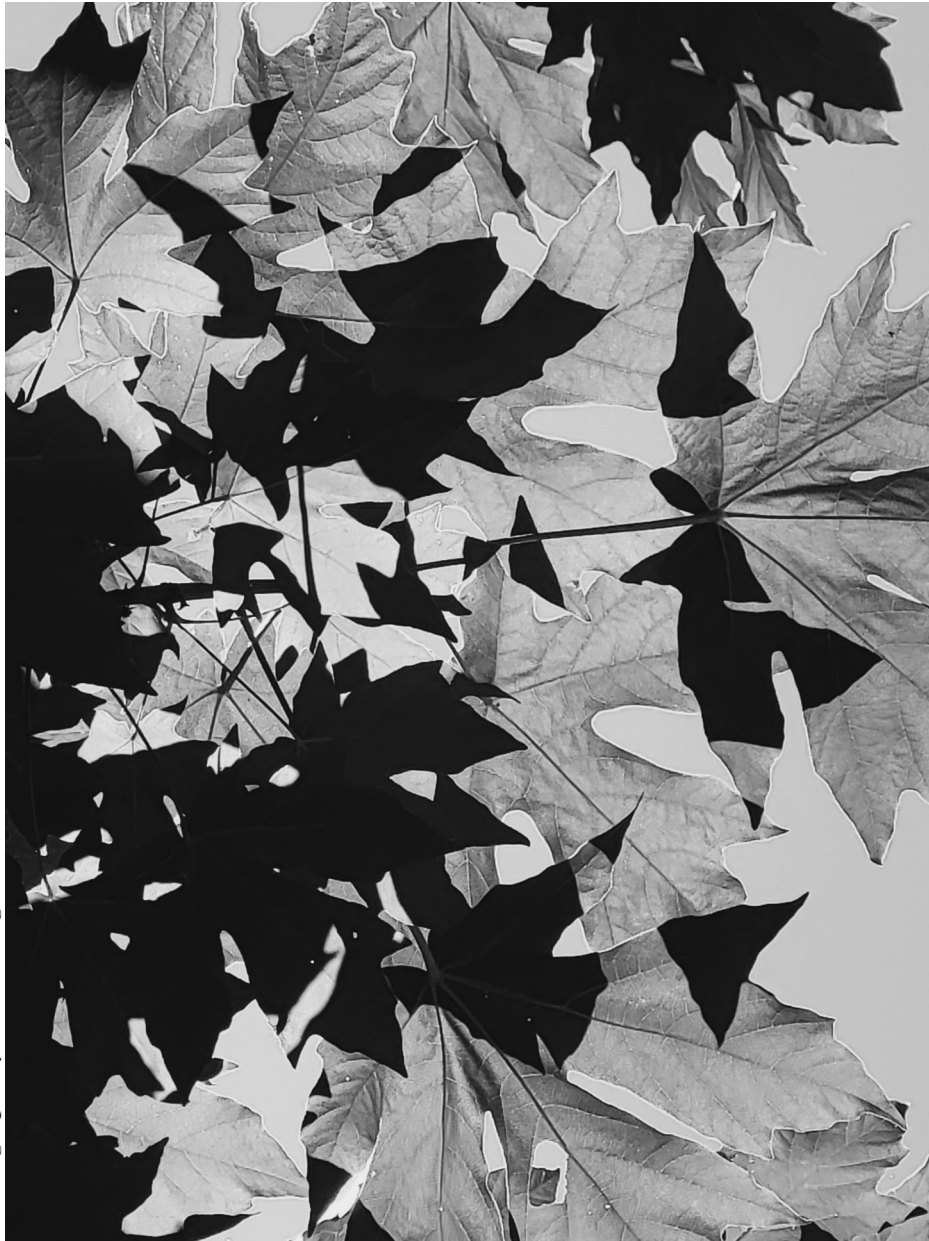


A Sky full of Scarabs // Marker & Pen by Cora Kocan

Squinting at the World

By Kate Arduser

Photograph by David Saiget



I took an art class
and the instructor suggested
that we squint our eyes
literally obscuring our vision
so that we could better
see
Light and Dark.

(continues on next page)

And now
I spend so much of my time squinting at the world
to see
it in black and white
and in this obscuration
I laugh at the millions
of ways
I see in between.

And here a season of bounty.
It makes me feel so much
that I cannot even feel how I felt.

So I've been squinting at this word—bounty—
squeezing the concept . . .
To get to know me.
And I love bounty!

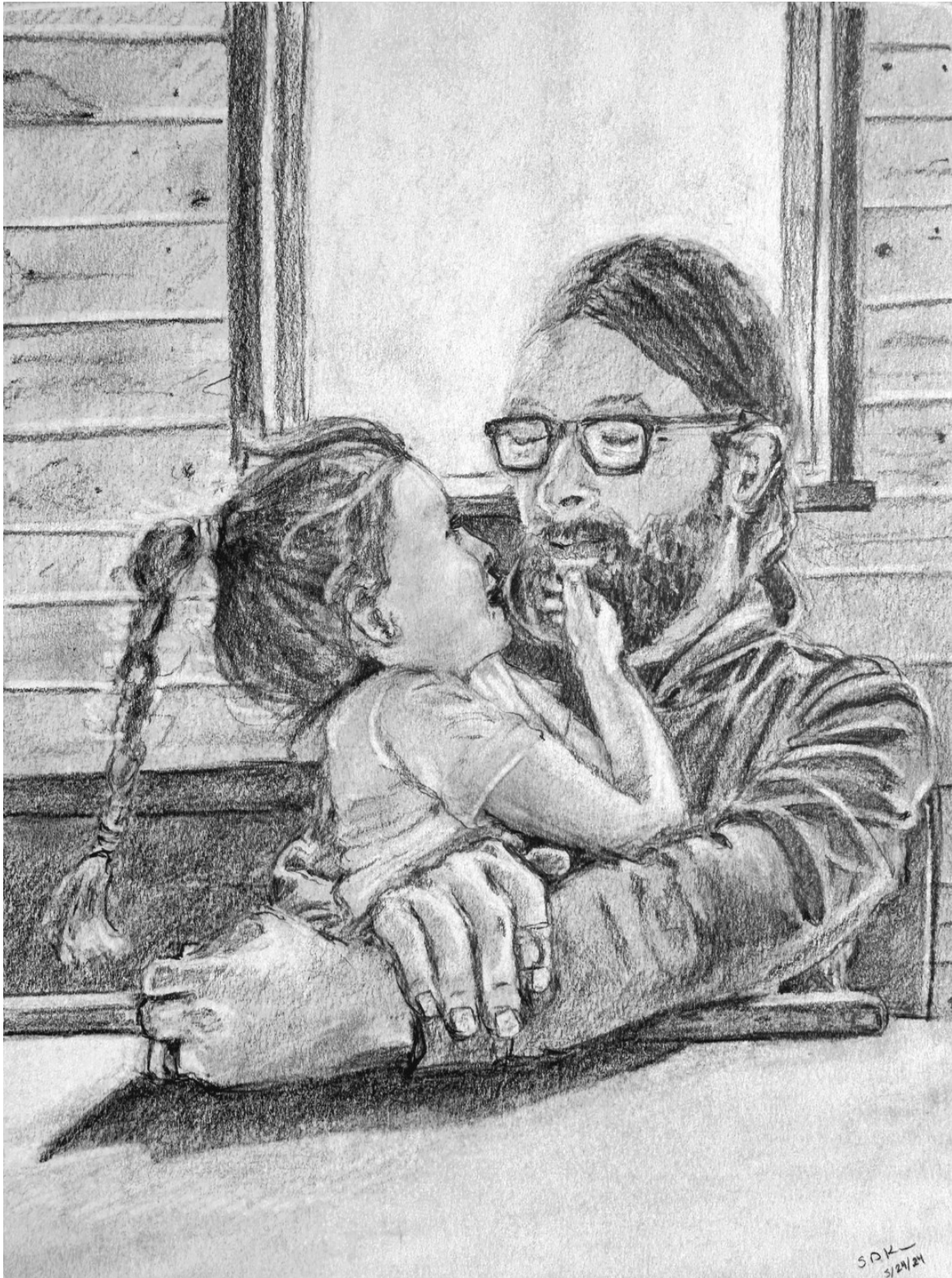
This word that likens pirates *and* priests.
Fiddles with social norms
when it comes to feasts
and the way we treat beasts.

This word I limited
to something
I thought
I felt in my belly.

But now I find bounty in skunk cabbage.
Something I cannot eat because it is poison on my lips.
But its scent stirs my breath
its color heaven to my eyes.

And its stories—
the painter who showed me where the most gigantic skunk cabbage lives,
the mother who shared that it's her son's favorite plant,
the teacher who sheepishly admitted they spent a day following a bear,
doing what a bear did,
which included eating skunk cabbage . . .

Its stories,
that I am certain I will continue to collect—
Its stories,
fill me up.



Bounty // Graphite Pencil Illustration by Shelly Kocan